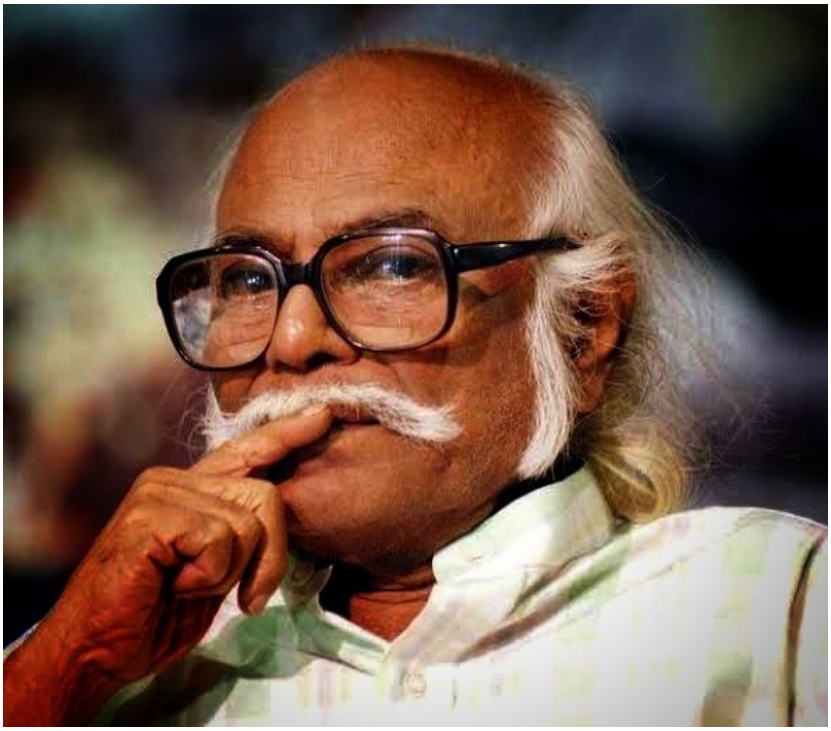
# Exploring Jayakandhan’s Short Stories: A Glimpse into Tamil Society.

thelifeofmine3.wordpress.com/2024/07/23/exploring-jayakandhans-short-stories-a-glimpse-into-tamil-society/

July 23, 2024



In **“Ore Nanban,”** Jayakandhan tells the story of two friends, one of whom is a writer and financially dependent on the other. When the dependent friend faces a situation where his friend fails to help him, he becomes bitter and starts believing that wealthy people behave this way, a sentiment he also expresses in his stories. They unexpectedly meet one day, but the writer friend feels ignored and confronts his friend in frustration. The other friend explains that he values true friendship where both can support each other but emphasizes the importance of each person striving for their own success. Jayakandhan beautifully illustrates these themes of dependency, friendship, and personal growth in “Ore Nanban.”

In the short story **“Udankattai,”** a Brahmin girl eagerly prepares for her wedding, filled with dreams and excitement. Tragically, she learns that her groom has died just before the wedding, leaving her devastated. When she and her father visit the deceased groom, she removes her bindi and flowers on their return. Her father questions this act, pointing out that they were not yet married. She simply responds that had they been married, she would have committed “sati” (udankattai). This poignant ending powerfully conveys the depth of her pain.

In the short story **“Naan Irukiren,”** a man with leprosy begs for food around town. One day, he sees a differently-abled man attempting to commit suicide on a railway track. He saves him and shares his wisdom, recounting the numerous deaths he has witnessed and the horrid sight of dead bodies. The differently-abled also speaks of his mother’s

immense struggles to raise him and describes a humiliating incident he faced while traveling on a bus. He tells the man that living a life burdened by suffering is preferable to dying. The next day, the differently-abled man discovers that the leprosy-stricken man has died on the railway track. Filled with tears, he reflects on the words of the leprosy man who gave him the courage to live: “He taught me to live, and I taught him to die.”

This short story is narrated in **“Ithu Yenna Periya Vishayama,”** which revolves around two friends reuniting after a long time. One friend, who had lost his job, sought help from the other but was ignored and neglected in his office. Frustrated and hurt, he noticed his friend’s indifference, which culminated in him leaving the office in tears. The next day, he was gripped by fear upon hearing about someone dying on the train tracks, worrying it might be his friend. Upon reaching the office, he found a letter from his friend that said, “You took good revenge on me.” The letter recalled a childhood incident where one friend had cursed the other during a game, leading their peers to exclude him. Even though other friends eventually reconciled, this friend never did, believing the neglect he faced now was revenge for that childhood slight. The letter also noted that despite his unemployment, he had many things to keep him occupied, highlighting the lingering effects of their unresolved past.

**“Thargathirku appal”** The story follows a young man who, after deciding to have tea and donate two rupees to a blind beggar, finds himself one rupee short of the train fare due to an unexpected price increase. In a desperate attempt to make up the shortfall, he considers taking a rupee from the beggar’s plate but is caught and reprimanded. After apologizing, he misses his train and waits for the next one. It turns out that missing the first train was fortuitous, as the train he missed was involved in an accident. The story suggests that good deeds may bring unexpected benefits, even if they come with challenges, and emphasizes the importance of integrity and selflessness.

**“Thavarugal kutram alla”** (forgiveness) The story describes a situation where a higher-ranking man attempts to take advantage of his assistant, who had always been friendly. When she becomes angry and aggressive, he realizes his mistake and feels deep remorse. After apologizing sincerely, she forgives him, citing her Christian belief that heartfelt remorse should be met with forgiveness. Later, when one of his close relatives who worked in his house stole some money and returned it with an apology, the man, recalling his own experience, decides to forgive rather than punish, reflecting the lesson he learned about the power of genuine repentance and forgiveness.

**“Kevalam oru naai”** The story tells of two neighboring families who shared a dog named Veera. The children from both families loved playing with Veera, and the dog enjoyed the affection from both homes. However, when a dispute arose between the families, they separated, and Veera found himself caught in the middle. At first, the dog went to the first house for food but was mistreated and kicked out. Seeking refuge, Veera went to the second house, only to be rejected there as well. The second family, upset that Veera had gone to the first house, also kicked him out, calling him “naai” (dog). Through these experiences, the dog realized its true position and nature, understanding that it was

simply a dog, not the beloved Veera. The story, narrated from the dog's perspective, highlights the harsh reality of its situation and the disillusionment of realizing one's place in the world.

***Agni prevesam…***